

Prof. Varda Rotter

Department of Molecular Cell Biology



Prof. Varda Rotter received her BSc and MSc from Bar-Ilan University in 1969 and 1971, respectively. She earned her PhD in cell biology from the Weizmann Institute in 1976. Following postdoctoral research at MIT, she returned to Israel and joined the faculty of the Weizmann Institute. She has chaired the Institute's Department of Molecular Cell Biology (2003-2010) and served as the President's Advisor for Advancing Women in Science (2011-2014). She was the director of the Women's Health Research Center from 2000 to 2014 and the director of the FAMRI Center of Excellence since 2003. She is the Norman and Helen Asher Professor of Cancer Research.

Prof. Rotter is a world-leading pioneer in cancer research. She was one of the first to uncover the role of the p53 protein in oncogenesis and the first to suggest that p53 could be regarded as a tumor-specific marker. Her most seminal contribution to this field was the determination that the gene responsible for the production of p53 – carrying the same name – undergoes a gain-of-function transformation to obtain its carcinogenic functions when mutated. In recent years, Prof. Rotter has been delving deeper into the mechanisms that underline this gain-of-function of p53, and even found initial evidence that suggest its normal state has an important role in healthy

development in humans. She is now exploring ways to re-educate oncogenic mutant p53 proteins so that they reverse their oncogenic functions.

Prof. Rotter is the recipient of numerous honors, including the EMET Prize for Art, Science, and Culture in the field of biology (2003); the Lombroso Award in Cancer Research (2007-2008); the Anthony Dipple Carcinogenesis Award given by the European Association for Cancer Research (2014); and was the Helmholtz International Fellow in 2013. She is a member of the American Association for Cancer Research, the International Union against Cancer, the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO), the Israel Immunological Association, and the American Society for Microbiology. Prof. Rotter served as president of the Israel Society for Cancer Research (2011-2013). She has been appointed external scientific advisor to the advisory board of the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology's Rappaport Research Institute and serves as a member of the Board of Trustees of the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) in Heidelberg and others. She serves on the editorial boards of several prestigious journals.

Prof. Rotter is married with two children.